

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

demonstrations. Police would break up some of the menacing meetings or even occasionally raid the Tudeh headquarters and temporarily detain unruly individuals. In the north, however, the police were practically powerless in view of the generous protection assured to the Tudeh by Soviet troops. Suspension was, as we know, another weapon of the government. But recourse to this means was not always free from foreign interference. The Soviet Embassy intervened actively in these press matters and itself often demanded the suspension of a paper hostile to Communism. Thus despite the basic community of interests with the nationalists, the government was obliged to suspend many a newspaper belonging to Seyyid Zia ed-Din's party. These suspensions were only a temporary expedient, and in the foregoing chapter we have seen how they could be evaded. Nor could police action be considered as adequate to combat Communism. It was clear that an ideology or an organized political action could be fought only by another ideology represented by properly organized groups.

Several forces contributed to the "ideological" anti-Communist front. Starting from the summit of the Iranian hierarchy, we may mention the Court. The Court not only exerted a political influence; it also acted as a symbol. The institution of monarchy is deeply ingrained in the Iranian mentality of both the lower and the upper classes. The young Shah himself was reputed to be endowed with quick intelligence and a perceptive mind. He lacked, of course, the strength and experience of his father, but he managed to maintain his prestige. His influence was said to be strongest among army of-

ficers.

Pursuing a policy designed to enhance his prestige, the young Shah undertook three important journeys during the war period. Accompanied by numerous court attendants, he went to Isfahan in 1943. He was received in this ancient capital with due pomp and ceremony. His trip was linked to the difficult situation prevailing at that time in Isfahan's textile factories, wherein Communist propaganda had made important headway. His journey resulted in the creation of several company unions. Temporarily, at least, this curbed the Tudeh's hold on the workers. Later, in the fall of the same year, the Shah traveled to Meshed, capital of the northeastern province

[236]